

**THOMASTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2011 at 7:00 pm
SELECTMAN'S CONFERENCE ROOM**

Members Present: Jeff Dunn, Rich Sileo, Mike Madow, Cesare "Skip" DeIVaglio, Matt Stancavage

P&Z Liaison Present: Ralph Celone

Others Present: Doreen Breen, Darryl Maslak, Christine Yoos, Paul Yoos, Robby Piazzaroli, Town Times

J Dunn called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

Minutes:

A motion was made by C DeIVaglio and seconded by R Sileo to accept the minutes from the meeting of September 26, 2011. Motion unanimously passed.

Communications:

- Blain Rogozinski's resignation – M Stancavage made a motion to accept Blain's resignation with regrets, C Delvaglio seconded. Motion was unanimously passed. R Sileo to send an email accepting Blain's resignation with regrets.
- J Dunn read information about a program being held Friday morning (10/28).
- J Dunn read an email from Ed Mone about LandJet moving to town. M Madow will reach out to both LandJet and Summit to discuss potential incentives.
- R Celone to attend regional land use seminars in Burlington.

Old Business:

- Discussion of tax incentive plan CGS 12-65e
- Distressed Municipality Requirements
 - Section 32-9p-4 was distributed for review
 - **No update**
- Conference call with CGI regarding the proposed town video project
 - J Hartz and R Sileo presented the plan to the Board of Selectman (BOS) in September. They requested that the contract and recommendation letter be sent to town attorney Mike Rybak. R Sileo sent all of the documents for review.

- Mike Rybak returned several questions. J Hartz researched each question with CGI. J Hartz and R Sileo returned to the BOS in October to review those answers. The questions and answers are listed below.
- J Hartz to request the list of businesses that CGI will not allow.

1. Does the Town have an officially adopted policy governing commercial advertising links on its website?

To overcome this issue, in a few cases there is a disclaimer used after you click on the video link that tells the reader that they have left the town website and now they are entering an outside marketing firm... Darien, CT uses this www.darienct.gov

J Hartz has confirmed that CGI will implement a pop up disclaimer.

2. Will other commercial links be allowed, and if so, under what terms?

Thomaston will have the first and last right of refusal on any business wishing to participate. CGI has a policy not to solicit inappropriate businesses. Thomaston can provide a list of businesses for example that may be behind in taxes and thus cannot participate until they are paid up.

3. Has this same opportunity been offered publically to any local e-commerce advertisers?

Out of 2500 communities only 5 have tried this and all 5 have come back to CGI. The reasons being the cost of RFP and that local advertising companies cannot combine the free video program and everything all at no cost.

4. Since this amounts to leasing space on the Town's website in exchange for video services, shouldn't there be a request for proposal (RFP) process advertised publically so others can bid?

Same as above in CGI's experience this takes 6 to 8 months out of the schedule and always comes back to CGI. Typically, the competing company cannot afford to offer this program.

5. The CGI agreement is automatically renewed after the first three years for successive two-year periods unless either party takes action to terminate. I do not recommend that the Town sign automatically renewable contracts, regardless of the right to terminate. Municipal contracts should be for a reasonable term – no more than one or two years. Therefore, I cannot approve the agreement with CGI as drafted.

The auto renew clause can be taken out of the contracts. You may remember that Watertown had a similar issue. No problem.

J Hartz confirmed that CGI is willing to offer a 1-year contract term.

6. The letter of "introduction" on Town letterhead is clearly an endorsement of CGI by the Town government. Are you comfortable issuing the Town's official seal of approval for a private, commercial advertiser?

This is an opinion issue... CGI will be working in "partnership" with our town. If preferred, we can provide on the letter a local contact such as Rich Sileo or Jeff Dunn or anyone who can chat with the potential advertiser to make it more of a town friendly endeavor.

New Business:

- A discussion was held about moving the meeting to the third Monday for the 2012 calendar.
- An agenda item will be added to the next meeting to review open EDC positions and the role of vice chairman.
- J Dunn provided an update on the Thomaston Opera House. Landmark is in negotiations with the town. Premier Concerts have booked several events throughout the remainder of 2011 and into 2012.
- J Dunn stated that the BOS would like the EDC to begin helping with the Plan of Development. The state's funding will be tied to how well the town's Plan of Development. R Celone suggested that the EDC draft a proposal and present it to P&Z.
- R Sileo reviewed the EDC sub committee list, as follows.
 1. Public Relations (make contact with businesses and landlords) – Blain Rogozinski, Mike Madow
 2. Project Review (verify required documentation) –
 3. Gateway Signage – Jeff Dunn
 4. Downtown & Retail Parking – Jeff Dunn, Matt Stancavage, Mike Madow
 5. Website & Database – Sal Santa Maria, Rich Sileo, Joe Hartz

Welcoming New Business:

- Cutie Pie Bakery is now open.
- JDT's Brick House opened at the beginning of October.
- BRT is looking to expand into the ERA Property space.

Subcommittee Reports:

- See above for the web site committee updates
 - R Sileo to investigate putting the questionnaire on the web site or using Survey Monkey. No update
 - R Sileo to investigate if there is an EDC email box. There is an EDC email box. It is monitored by Pat Santa Maria. She forwards all receipts to the EDC members. It is a requirement that a town employee can only access it.
- Incentive Sub Committee
 - No update

- Social Sub Committee
 - No update
- Downtown and Parking Sub Committee
 - J Dunn and the sub committee will schedule a meeting with downtown businesses to discuss parking options.

Public Comment:

C Yoos

- Stated that there shouldn't be a policy barring businesses from advertising on the video website if they aren't current on their taxes. She stated that there are people that serve on town boards that aren't current on their taxes.

D Breen

- Holding a meeting to discuss Arts & Culture in Thomaston on 11/7 at 7PM at the Phoenix Rising Center.
- The Northwest Connecticut Arts Council is holding the fall Culture Mix at the Phoenix Rising Center on 11/16 from 5:30 – 7PM.

Adjournment:

A motion was made by M Madow and seconded by M Stancavage to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 PM. Motion unanimously passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Sileo, EDC